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Disarmament Commission

266th meeting

Tuesday, 26 July 2005, 10 a.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Rowe ..... (Sierra Leone)

The meeting resumed at 10.25 a.m.

The Chairman: I indicated yesterday that we had information concerning the Bureau of the Commission. I am now in a position to announce that the Group of Western European and other States has completed the nomination process for the vacant positions in the Bureau. Mr. Christophe McBride of the United Kingdom and Mr. Meir Itzchaki of Israel have been nominated to be members of the Bureau as Vice-Chairmen. It is my understanding that there is consensus and general agreement among the members of the Commission that those representatives should be elected officers of the Commission this morning.

If there is no objection, may I take it that the Commission wishes to elect Mr. Christophe McBride of the United Kingdom and Mr. Meir Itzchaki of Israel as Vice-Chairmen of the Disarmament Commission?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: As I indicated yesterday evening, it is my intention to allow delegations, within the various groups and across the various groups, to get together as we did on the issue of the revitalization of the Commission, when representatives met individually in their groups and across groups and came to an understanding, which we all eventually accepted. I think that that formula could work this time, and I intend now to suspend the meeting so as to give delegations the opportunity to try to resolve some of the issues that we were unable to resolve yesterday. We will resume in one hour's time — or less, if representatives feel that they can reach agreement before that, which would be welcome.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): Before the meeting is suspended, I would like to take this opportunity to convey my Government's sincere condolences to the Government of Egypt in connection with the terrorist attack at the weekend in Sharm el-Sheikh, in which innocent people were murdered or injured. Our thoughts and prayers go out this day to the victims of terrorism in Egypt and everywhere.

Mr. McBride (United Kingdom): I would like to try to understand why we are breaking for informal consultations. My understanding at the close of play yesterday was that there seemed to be an emerging consensus that we would not touch paragraphs 8 and 9 and that we would keep the reference to 2006 in paragraph 10. If I am incorrect, it would be useful to have a clarification. Otherwise, I do not understand why we should break for one hour. What are we actually going to be discussing? Before we agree to suspend the meeting for an hour, I would appreciate being given an idea about exactly what is going to be discussed so that we can make rapid progress as soon as we reconvene. I fear that we may need to meet again this afternoon if we take an hour this morning to discuss issues on which my delegation, at least, is not very clear.

The Chairman: I said yesterday that I would proceed in this way, given the state of affairs at about 6 p.m. or 6.10 p.m. There was some problems — let us put it that way. I suggested at the time that we could

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probably use the same formula we used with respect to the revitalization issue. I proposed that we resume the meeting at 11 o'clock. In other words, we would meet at 10, hold elections for the members of the Bureau, break for consultations and then come back at 11.

But if we find, at this stage, that there have been developments overnight and that we do not wish to have this recess, by all means we can proceed. But I just want to be assured that, if we do proceed, we will not repeat what happened last evening. We can continue to debate, but hopefully the process will be a little smoother. I am not expecting an automatic agreement. We need to continue our discussions. We have our differences, but we should realize that we cannot prolong this process indefinitely.

I gather, as the representative of the United Kingdom has said, that the Commission believes that there is no need for a recess. But I would like to know where we are now, and, if there is a consensus, or a convergence of views as to where we are, then I think we can move ahead without having the recess.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Sometimes we decide on something, and then we see that the situation is different, and we change our decision. I would recall that on Friday we decided to finish the meeting on Monday, but it was not possible, so here we are.

As to the comments made by our colleague from the United Kingdom, we, too, would like to know what the latest situation is. If the understanding is that paragraphs 8 and 9 are to remain as they are, and paragraph 10 is the last formulation proposed by Egypt and there is agreement on it, then I guess we can continue in formal mode and perhaps, hopefully, finish with the adoption of the report.

Mr. McBride (United Kingdom): My apologies for taking the floor again. I am happy to read what I believe is on the table and indicate where we are at the moment, so maybe it would be useful to see if other delegations agree that this is what is on the table, to see if we can make progress on these issues, and then move on to the rest of the report.

I am in your hands, Mr. Chairman, but I am more than happy to read out what I have as the paragraphs which I understood to be agreed as of yesterday evening. If you would like me to read them, I would be more than happy to do so.

The Chairman: I have no objection to the representative of the United Kingdom reading them out, but I want to make sure that what he is going to read represents not just his own views, or his own understanding or that of the European Union, but the general understanding of the Commission at that time.

Will the representative of the United Kingdom please read out the text of the paragraphs?

Mr. McBride (United Kingdom): I should like first to say that this is my understanding of what was agreed. I cannot do anything more than state what my understanding is.

Paragraph 8 would read:

> "On 18 July 2005, the Commission agreed, *ad referendum*, to the inclusion of the following item on nuclear disarmament, as proposed by the Chairman, on the provisional agenda of its substantive session:
>
> (i) 'Recommendations for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects, in particular for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament.'"

Paragraph 9 would read:

> "On 19 July 2005, the Commission decided to amend item (ii) above, namely the Chairman's proposal on conventional disarmament. At the same time, it agreed, *ad referendum*, to the inclusion of the following item on conventional weapons on the provisional agenda of its substantive session:
>
> (ii) 'Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.'"

Paragraph 10 would now read:

> "On 20 July 2005, the Commission also agreed, *ad referendum*, as part of the package including the two agenda items mentioned above, that the issue of measures for improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the Disarmament Commission will be considered in plenary meetings at its 2006 substantive session, with equitable time allocated to it."

That is my delegation's understanding.

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt): With regard to the intervention made by our colleague from the United Kingdom, I should simply like to clarify our suggestion with regard to paragraph 10, which is the following:

> "On 20 July 2005, the Commission also agreed, *ad referendum*, in addition to the two agenda items agreed to above, to include the following text in its report: 'the issue of measures for improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the Disarmament Commission will be considered in plenary meetings at its 2006 substantive session, with equitable time allocated to it.'"

Mr. McBride (United Kingdom): In principle, we would be happy with that amendment to what I had read earlier on. If no delegation has any other concerns, I think that we can move on now to the next part of the report.

The Chairman: Can I take it that the Commission agrees to the formulation presented a few minutes ago by the representative of Egypt for paragraph 10, and adopts paragraph 10, as amended?

Paragraph 10, as amended, was retained.

The Chairman: I indicated at the start of our meeting yesterday that I had an amendment or an addition to the report, which I thought could be inserted as 10 bis or 11 bis. I think that it would probably be better to include it after paragraph 10. Paragraph 10 bis would read:

> "One delegation sought additional time before providing final approval to both the draft report and the package contained therein."

There is a reference in paragraph 10 bis to "the package" — I want to draw attention to that. That is for purposes of clarification; the package is not mentioned earlier; the Egyptian proposal does not refer to the package.

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt): Paragraph 10, as it has been adopted, begins:

> "On 20 July 2005, the Commission also agreed, *ad referendum*, in addition to the two agenda items agreed to above, to include the following text in its report:".

The text then follows.

The Chairman: Are there any comments on the proposed paragraph 10 bis?

Mr. Rachmianto (Indonesia): I do not have a problem with the amendment. With regard to the sequence, however, the reference to the package comes in paragraph 11. Perhaps, logically, your amendment should be included after paragraph 11, not after paragraph 10.

The Chairman: I take note of the comments of the representative of Indonesia.

Miss Majali (Jordan): My colleague from Indonesia said exactly what I was going to say — it would be better for the additional paragraph to follow paragraph 11, or, perhaps paragraph 12, to which it could be linked. That would be better in the view of my delegation.

The Chairman: Does any delegation wish to comment on the placement of the paragraph before we deal with the substance?

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): I will be brief. I think, Mr. Chairman, that your suggestion is acceptable to my delegation.

The Chairman: It is thus my understanding that the United States would prefer it to be 10 bis, not 11 bis.

Mr. Rachmianto (Indonesia): On a point of clarification, I appreciate the comments made by my colleague from the United States. However, since your proposal — for 10 bis, for the time being — refers to "the package", and the package is referred to in paragraph 11, for my delegation placement after paragraph 10 would not be logical. We should not refer to something that has not already been mentioned.

The Chairman: I suggest that we now move on to the substance. If we move to the substance, the issue of placement might be moot.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to seek clarification. With regard to the language referring to "one delegation", it was the understanding of this delegation, at least, that when we adopted something *ad referendum*, it meant that all delegations needed time to send the final package — or whatever we agreed — to our capitals for instructions. I do not have a problem with an agreement to highlight one delegation. But there should at least be a simple sentence stating that all delegations sent the

package — or whatever had been agreed — to their capitals for instructions. I believe that if we want to reflect everything we should reflect everything.

The Chairman: Would the representative of Iran suggest a formulation that we could discuss — just an initial draft — so as to facilitate our work? Do you want to replace 10 bis with something else? You have given us an idea; could you give me a rough formulation or draft that we can work on?

Ms. Leong (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): With regard to the paragraph we are discussing, it would be a good idea to introduce the date of the event into the paragraph so that it is consistent with other paragraphs, because paragraphs 8, 9, 10 and 12 contain dates. The paragraph we are discussing should also include the date of the event.

The Chairman: I take note of that.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am no longer insisting on my proposal.

Mr. Gala López (Cuba): In this proposal for paragraph 11 bis, we suggest that, before the phrase "one delegation sought additional time", we introduce a reference to the idea of the agreement *ad referendum*. One way to rephrase it might be the following: "After adopting *ad referendum* the package, one delegation sought additional time".

The Chairman: I would like to repeat the Cuban proposal as I heard it. My understanding is that the representative of Cuba is suggesting that we amend paragraph 10 bis or 11 bis to read:

> "After agreement ad referendum on the package, one delegation sought additional time before providing final approval to both the draft report and the package contained therein."

Is this the draft that Cuba is suggesting? I read out the rest of the passage as well.

So that we could move faster, taking into account the suggestion by the representative of Venezuela regarding the date, we could add: "On 20 July 2005, after agreement ad referendum on the package, one delegation sought additional time", et cetera, et cetera. That is where we are now.

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt): At the beginning of the meeting, Mr. Chairman, you proposed to allow some time for informal consultations. So could we perhaps have 5 or 10 minutes to review this now so as not to prolong the discussion on the remaining paragraphs?

The Chairman: Before I put that to the Commission, I would like to hear from the representative of the United Kingdom, who has requested the floor.

Mr. McBride (United Kingdom): I think that the suggestion by my Egyptian colleague is a very sensible one at this time. I would agree with a 5- or 10-minute recess.

However, before we break, I would just like to highlight one of my possible differences in understanding with regard to the Cuban proposal. He suggested "after adopting ad referendum the package". As far as I can recall from the discussions, it was "after the deletion of the term 'ad referendum' in the package, one delegation ..." Otherwise, as it stands, it gives the impression that the Commission agreed on the package, and then one delegation said, "Well, actually, we do not agree; we need to consult with our capital", when in fact we had a package with the reference "ad referendum", we deleted the term "ad referendum", and that became the package. Then one delegation said that before it could approve the final report and the package contained therein, it needed to consult with its capital. That is a very small distinction, but I think that, for the purposes of the report, we need to be clear that the package was never agreed. We agreed to delete a reference, and then one delegation needed time.

Ms. Aghajanian (Armenia): I fully agree with the comments just made by our colleague from the United Kingdom. Given those comments, I believe that the paragraph should appear as 11 bis, not 10 bis.

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt): I have to say that I agree in part with what our colleague from the United Kingdom just said. However, there is a slight difference in our recollection of the events that took place on 20 July. That is why we requested a recess of 5 or 10 minutes so that we could work on the language.

Also, before we recess, I would like to point out that we also support the proposal by our colleague from Indonesia regarding the placement of the paragraph — after there is agreement on it — after paragraph 11.

Ms. Notutela (South Africa): During the recess, I think we also need to discuss whether we actually need this paragraph. As far as my delegation is concerned,

we do not really need it, because everything was addressed; everyone had to consult with his or her capital to obtain final approval of the whole thing. So we need to think about whether or not we actually need this paragraph.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): It seems that there are differing views on this new formulation. I would just like to support the comment made by our colleague from Armenia. If there is an understanding that we need a reference to the request for additional time after the deletion of the term "ad referendum" in those paragraphs, it certainly should come after paragraph 11.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): I would agree that perhaps a 5- to 10-minute recess would be a good idea. I would also like to mention that, even as late as yesterday, we heard several delegations rightly suggest that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. Therefore, in this context, perhaps what the representative of South Africa has suggested might be a good way to proceed.

Mr. McBride (United Kingdom): I would also like to comment on the South African proposal, which I think would be a very neat way to make progress — where we could delete both paragraph 11 and paragraph 10 bis or 11 bis, as the Chairman has suggested, because I think that would reflect the situation given the turn of events. While it is nice to include paragraph 11, it does not actually change the substance of the report, since we are not actually going to be recommending any agenda items. I therefore think that the South African proposal to delete paragraph 11 means that we do not have to worry about 10 bis and 11 bis, and we can go straight to consideration of paragraph 12.

The Chairman: We shall therefore have a recess. I assume that, among other things, if necessary, the Commission will first address the question of whether or not we should include paragraph 10 bis, or maybe 11 bis. Secondly, if we do agree that we should include it, the Commission will consider whether or not it agrees to the amendment proposed by Cuba, with the additional reference to the date proposed by Venezuela. The third issue is, if we agree to including it, to determine its placement. The representative of the United Kingdom has also just referred to paragraph 11. I would therefore suggest that the Commission address those questions and return at about 11.15 a.m. — I do not know how much time it will need.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Before we go into recess, as I understood it, there is a proposal to delete both new paragraphs 10 bis or 11 bis and 11. I did not hear any sort of strong feeling expressed for keeping those two paragraphs. If that is the case, then perhaps we do not need to recess and can just agree on deleting those two paragraphs and proceed directly to consideration of paragraph 12.

The Chairman: I take note of what the representative of Iran has said. But just to be sure, let us have a short recess — perhaps for just three minutes. But I think that we do need to do so, in order that, when we return, I will know exactly what position we are in. I shall therefore suspend the meeting now for 10 minutes. We shall resume our work at 11.15 a.m.

The meeting was suspended at 11.03 a.m. and resumed at noon.

The Chairman: It seems that we needed that recess after all, as we were supposed to come back at quarter past, and it is later than that. I hope the results are positive.

The floor is open for representatives to speak on the outcome of the inter-group informal consultations that have been held during the past 45 minutes or so.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Although I have not been charged with presenting the results of the consultations, I see that other colleagues are perhaps waiting for someone to break the ice.

We discussed the benefits and advantages of having details on what took place during the meetings and negotiations. Since there are some slight differences, this might cause problems in terms of language, so, to enable us to move ahead quickly to adopt the report, we reached a kind of understanding on the report. We agreed to delete paragraph 11, the new paragraph 10 bis, and paragraph 14.

Since some of the delegations had problems with the new addition — paragraph 10 bis — I believe that this was the best option. It is my understanding that all delegations involved in the consultations agreed to this option, although there are some options with other advantages, but, for the time being, the best option, we believe, is to delete these paragraphs, and then perhaps quickly go to the adoption of the report.

There was also a suggestion that paragraph 16 be deleted. When we discuss that paragraph, perhaps we could discuss also the reason for that. It relates mostly to the practicality, not the substance, of paragraph 16, since indeed there would not be any possibility for such consultations to take place. All delegations are involved in the summit, and, after that, the First Committee. In practical terms, there would not be any opportunity for the continuation of the discussions, so we could go directly to the organizational session in November or December and then, from there, we can continue our consultations, if we have time, until the next substantive session.

What I said reflects my own understanding, and I hope that with the agreement that was reached during the consultations, we can quickly adopt the report.

Mr. McBride (United Kingdom): Mr. Chairman, I should like just to confirm that my understanding is similar to that of the representative of Iran. It is the deletion of paragraph 11, the deletion of the additional paragraph that you had suggested either as a 10 bis or as an 11 bis, and the deletion of paragraph 14. I think there was also the deletion of the word "also" at the start of paragraph 15, which is just for presentational purposes.

I also understand that, with respect to discussions on the deletion of paragraph 16, as my colleague from Iran has highlighted, which would be mainly from a practical point of view, we, of course — like, we suspect, many other delegations — would be prepared to continue those discussions in the margins of the First Committee and in a less structured way in order to try to see if we can resolve the issue of a substantive agenda for 2006.

Finally, there was also discussion of changing the reference to "25 July" in paragraph 18 to "26 July". That is the understanding that I believe was reached, and, subject to this and addressing paragraph 5, I also think that we are very close to agreeing a report.

The Chairman: Would any other delegation like to corroborate the understanding as presented by the representatives of Iran and of the United Kingdom?

If not, I propose that we address paragraph 10 bis.

Mr. McBride (United Kingdom): Mr. Chairman, my understanding, following the informal consultations that took place during the suspension and following the intervention made by my Iranian colleague, confirmed by this delegation — and, I would hasten to say, given that there was no other interpretation of the facts — indicates that there is no longer a paragraph 10 bis on the table. I think, therefore, that the next paragraph — if you would like to go through paragraph by paragraph — on the table, as I understand it, is paragraph 12, which was part of the wider consultations which dealt with the rest of the report. I am happy to engage in terms of discussion, but I think that I have said all that there is to say now for the rest of the report until paragraph 5.

The Chairman: Please bear with me. I did not intend to open a discussion on paragraph 10. We have to follow the agreed procedures. It was agreed during informal consultations that something should be deleted; I took note of that. Now we have to decide to delete paragraph 10 bis. I did not imply that I was going to open discussion of 10 bis. We will go paragraph by paragraph.

So, on the basis of the explanations offered by the representatives of the United Kingdom and of Iran, may I take it that it is the wish of the Commission to delete paragraph 10 bis?

Paragraph 10 bis was deleted.

The Chairman: We turn now to paragraph 11.

Again, on the basis of the understanding that we have received from the delegations of Iran and the United Kingdom, it appears that there is agreement that the Commission should delete paragraph 11. I see no objection.

Paragraph 11 was deleted.

The Chairman: We will now move on to paragraph 12, as it appears in document A/CN.10/2005/CRP.2/Rev.3. If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to retain paragraph 12.

Paragraph 12 was retained.

The Chairman: We will now proceed to paragraph 13, under section III. Are there comments or corrections? I hear none.

Paragraph 13 was retained.

The Chairman: We will now move on to section IV. On the basis of the understanding expressed by the representatives of the United Kingdom and Iran and the

understanding reached in the informal consultations, there is a proposal that we delete paragraph 14. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to delete paragraph 14.

Paragraph 14 was deleted.

The Chairman: The Commission will now consider paragraph 15. The representative of the United Kingdom suggested that we delete the first word of paragraph 15, "Also". If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to delete that word, so that the sentence will begin "On 26 July 2005".

It was so decided.

The Chairman: We will now consider paragraph 15, as amended. If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to retain paragraph 15, as amended.

Paragraph 15, as amended, was retained.

The Chairman: We will now move on to paragraph 16. I understand that we may have to make some adjustments to this paragraph.

Mr. Baldi (Italy): I am very glad that we have now found the appropriate pace for agreeing on the report.

I just wanted to share my understanding of what was proposed concerning paragraph 16. I understood that it should be deleted, and I think we can live with that. We would be in favour of deleting paragraph 16.

The Chairman: Should we delete paragraph 16? It appears that, at this stage, the Commission wishes to do so.

Paragraph 16 was deleted.

The Chairman: Next, we will proceed to paragraph 17, under section IV. Are there comments or amendments? I see none.

Paragraph 17 was retained.

The Chairman: Finally, we will consider paragraph 18.

Miss Majali (Jordan): I believe that the date in paragraph 18 should be adjusted to show that the Commission adopted the report on 26 July. Otherwise, the paragraph is acceptable.

The Chairman: I take note of that. Therefore, paragraph 18 would read as follows:

> "At the same meeting, on 26 July 2005, the Commission adopted, as a whole, its report to the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. "

Miss Majali (Jordan): It is no longer the same meeting. We should delete "At the same meeting" and start with "On 26 July".

The Chairman: So then paragraph 18 would read,

> "On 26 July, the Commission adopted, as a whole, its report to the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. "

If there are no further comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to retain paragraph 18, as amended.

Paragraph 18, as amended, was retained.

The Chairman: At this point, we have completed our consideration of all the paragraphs. Incidentally, I think that we will have to adjust paragraph 5 on the basis of the decision that we took earlier this morning to elect two additional Vice-Chairmen of the Commission.

Mr. McBride (United Kingdom): Yes, Mr. Chairman, you highlighted the fact that we still had to consider paragraph 5. I believe that there was an additional amendment involving the inclusion of the names of the two new Bureau members, which was discussed at the start of our consideration of the report, replacing the word "At" at the start of paragraph 5 with the word "During". I think that that amendment has found favour with a number of delegations. I just wanted to make sure that it is in your current version of the text.

The Chairman: It is.

At this stage, I believe I have the honour to announce that the report of the organizational meeting of the Commission, as a whole, is adopted.

The report, as a whole, was adopted.

Before we conclude, if members will bear with me, I should like to make a few comments, as Chairman.

I believe that at this stage no one should underestimate what we accomplished over three days

last week, from 18 to 20 July 2005, against all odds, against even our own expectations. I believe that we should not allow our accomplishment to be totally overshadowed by other problems — problems that we all recognize. We reached a point where, on the basis of what we achieved, I felt that we were — and I think that we still are — sending a message to the General Assembly, and to the international community at large, that the Disarmament Commission is viable and ready to reassume — I emphasize, reassume — its full responsibility as a specialized body of the General Assembly.

I believe — and I think I am expressing the views of the overwhelming majority of the members of the Commission — that we are also sending a message to the other component of the United Nations disarmament machinery, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The message is that the current international situation, including the various threats and challenges, demands a change of attitude in the deliberations, as well as the negotiations, on disarmament and international security. I think that we could say that the Disarmament Commission has set an example, notwithstanding the outcome of this meeting.

Did the Commission fail to reach agreement on its agenda? That is a rhetorical question; I leave the answer to you — I cannot answer it. I think that I am expressing the mood, or the spirit, of last week in saying that, although the outcome is difficult to explain to the outside world — and even to ourselves — the fact is that the Commission did agree to place two items on its agenda for next year. It also agreed to have an in-depth discussion of the issue of the Commission's method of work. However, regrettably — and here lies the irony, I must say — it was reluctant, in my view — I am not saying it failed — to tell its parent body, the General Assembly, that it had reached such an agreement. It was reluctant — I am not saying it failed — to admit that it was prepared to implement its own agreement.

From my vantage point as Chairman, all I can say is that, subsequent developments notwithstanding, we succeeded in establishing a new coalition for the revival of a dormant Disarmament Commission. When I speak about a new coalition I emphasize it, because we saw evidence of it a few minutes ago, when delegations from various groups sat around the table and tried to resolve the issue. To me, that is an expression or manifestation of that new coalition that I was talking about. It is my hope that that coalition comprising the various groups will remain intact during the consultations — informal or otherwise — for the Commission's next organizational session.

I would like to thank the members of the Commission for the confidence that they placed in me and the other members of the Bureau in facilitating the consultations, enabling us to arrive at this stage and to adopt the report of this organization session of the Commission.

Mr. Gala López (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We have taken note of your statement, Mr. Chairman. We would also like to make a number of comments.

First, we would like to emphasize that both in the informal consultations that were held at the beginning of July, as well as during this organizational meeting, the representatives of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement in my opinion truly showed a constructive attitude, consistent with our genuine interest in reaching agreement on the substantive agenda within the guidelines established by decision 52/492 and resolution 59/105, adopted by consensus by the General Assembly. The delegation of Cuba participated actively in those debates.

With regard to the *ad referendum* agreement on the items on the substantive agenda, which was reached last week and to which you, Sir, referred, my delegation truly regrets that it could not finally be endorsed today because the delegation of the United States chose to propose a substantive amendment. It is also greatly to be regretted that the Disarmament Commission was unable again this year to hold its substantive session.

We believe that the situation of the Disarmament Commission and of the multilateral disarmament machinery in general is increasingly a cause for concern. We reiterate that, in order to overcome that situation, we need renewed political support from the international community, in particular from those States that question the disarmament priorities set out by the General Assembly, including those set out during the first special session devoted to disarmament. We also reiterate that no changes in the working methods of the Commission could respond to the fact that the necessary political will is lacking on the part of certain States to make progress on a multilateral approach to disarmament, in particular the question of

nuclear disarmament. What took place during this organizational meeting clearly demonstrated that.

We hope that, in the context of the First Committee's work during the next session of the General Assembly, we will be able to make decisive progress with a view to creating the necessary conditions so that this Commission will be able to hold a substantive session in 2006.

Finally, my delegation would like to reiterate and emphasize that we are convinced that the Disarmament Commission must be preserved, as it is the specialized deliberative organ within the multilateral disarmament machinery of the United Nations.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): I would like to thank the Chairman for his efforts in recent days.

On Friday, 22 July, the United States proposed an amendment to the provisional agenda item on nuclear weapons that, if agreed, would allow the Disarmament Commission to begin substantive work at its 2006 session. Some delegations had questions about the American amendment. During forthcoming discussions this fall, the United States will be prepared to discuss its proposed amendment and related issues, as together we prepare for the 2006 organizational session of the Commission later this year.

We have made significant progress under the Chairman's leadership. The United States looks forward to engaging with all delegations in an effort to finalize our organizational arrangements for the 2006 session.

Mr. McBride (United Kingdom): I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chairman for leading us in our work over the past few months. I would also like to thank my colleagues in the Bureau and other delegations for their constructive attitude, which enabled us to make significant progress over the past nine days. The European Union remains willing to continue to work with the Chairman and with other delegations towards agreeing on a substantive agenda for our 2006 session.

Finally, I would like to thank members of the Secretariat and the interpreters for facilitating our work. We tested their patience and at times proved demanding, but they always delivered.

The Chairman: I would like to endorse the words of thanks that the representative of the United Kingdom expressed to the interpreters. I said the other day that we had the privilege of walking around the room or going outside, while they were sort of shut in their booths. I think they did a marvellous job and we are all happy. At least we were able to adopt our report.

I have listened to the sentiments expressed by the delegations that spoke. I am sure that others who did not speak also share those sentiments.

I hope that something will happen — and it should — between now and next year. I do not know how the process is going to develop, but, in my national capacity or otherwise, I am prepared to work with other delegations within the Non-Aligned Movement. As I have emphasized — and I hope that I am not repeating myself too much — we need to have cross-fertilization between groups between now and December, or next year. We need that.

Mr. Lazo-García (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is a bit concerned about the outcome of this session.

We believe that there is one basic element that has impeded the development of the entire disarmament system since the United States began developing a policy to build new atomic weapons. Despite the efforts by the representative of the United States — as he said — to convince his Government so that we could reach agreement on the Disarmament Commission's substantive agenda items, that was not possible.

It seems to me that what we must consider is that Governments that are continuously developing weapons of less strategic value intend to use those weapons. I therefore think that the system's machinery is not up to its task, given that the point is to change the entire disarmament system a bit in order to facilitate the use of those weapons. That is a concern of the delegation of Venezuela that we wanted to share with the Commission.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.